

WASHINGTON.

"Liberty and Union, now and forever, one and inseparable."

SATURDAY, JANUARY 4, 1851.

THE PAST, AND THE FUTURE.

We have now reached a point in our National history at which we may be permitted to rest for a moment—to look back upon the year which has just ended and those which went before it, and forward to the years which are to come. To this retrospect of the past, and glance at the future, we are impelled by a sense of duty, but yet more by a grateful appreciation of the generous confidence with which the readers of this paper have encouraged and sustained the course of its Editors in the trying conjuncture through which the country has lately passed.

Before, however, we enter upon our review of the past, let us cast our eyes over the area of the great field of controversy into which the Press, with the People of the United States, was forced some twelve months ago, and compare its general aspect at the present with that which it then wore. How glad the emotion which this survey, and the contrast between the condition of the country at that epoch and at this, cannot but excite in the heart of every lover of his country! How fervent his gratitude to the great Ruler of Heaven and Earth, that the tempest into which the political elements were lashed to such fury as to seem to jeopard the fabric of Government itself, has thus far spent its force without effecting a breach in any part of the Constitution, or displacing a single stone from the structure of the Union.

Of all the States, fifteen in number, which had been counted upon to engage in the design of breaking up this Confederation, the Governments of two only have so much as *entertained* any proposition looking to the severance of any member of the Union from the rest. Better still: of these two, one only has acted with such method as to induce the belief that the heart of the People is with the Executive and Legislative branches of its Government in this movement. Every other State seems to be tranquil; whilst, latest and best of all, the State of Georgia, resisting every seduction and appliance brought to bear upon her, has decisively repelled the tempter, declined the *lead* that was offered to her, and declared her adherence to the Union, whose foundations were cemented by the blood shed by her brave ancestry and their compatriots in the common cause.

Before entering further into the review which we propose to institute of the origin and the merits of the political combination which at one time threatened the integrity and even the duration of the Union, it is proper that we do to the two States above referred to the justice of placing before our readers copies of the official acts by which each of them has engaged herself, to a certain extent, in an enterprise which has for its object the separation of the State of SOUTH CAROLINA certainly, and possibly also of MISSISSIPPI, from the Federal Union. Those acts will be found at large in the preceding columns of this paper, and can hardly fail to engage every reader's attention.

From an analysis of these acts, it will be seen that they differ so much in their provisions that they can hardly be classed together; for, though the grounds of them be identical, or nearly so, the Mississippi act proposes only a Convention of the People for deliberation upon their real or supposed grievances, and to adopt measures of redress, &c.; which, before they become binding upon the State, are to be submitted to the People at the ballot box for their approval or disapproval. When we bear in mind that this act was passed by a Legislature composed of the same individuals as those who undertook, without any authority from the People, to appoint Delegates to the first Nashville Convention, it may without violence be presumed, that, in passing this act, they may have been influenced, in some degree, by that pride of opinion which in high party times plays so important a part in all deliberative bodies. When this act was passed, moreover, the Convention of the People of Georgia, called by the Governor of that State upon grounds and allegations similar to those recited in the Preamble to the Mississippi act, had not been held, nor was the result of the election of Delegates to that Convention then ascertained: so that the Legislators of Mississippi, deceived by the confident predictions of the Disorganizers in Georgia that their friends would prevail in that election, might have taken it for granted that they were only following the *lead* of Georgia, and would not want for associates at least in the incipient measures of conflict with the Union.

Be that as it may, the action of Mississippi stops far short of that of South Carolina, whose Legislative act cuts the knot which Mississippi proposes rather to untie. It projects at once a *Southern Congress*, prescribes the mode of appointment of her representatives to it, and forthwith elects the quota of four of them whose appointment it had devolved upon the Legislature; whilst the Legislature of Mississippi has taken a direct practical mode of ascertaining the sense of the People of the State upon the expediency of any extra-constitutional action, and, in the event of any such action being proposed by the State Convention, subjects the proposed action *again* to the popular vote. We have not the least apprehension, in the case of Mississippi, should the Disunionists or Secessionists succeed in electing a majority of the State Convention—which, however, we cannot believe that they will—that "the sober second sense of the People" will not disarm its measures of any danger to the People of that State, or of any other State which might be disposed to follow its example in a different event.

Whilst, however, we express this hope and confidence in the patriotism and sober sense of the body of the People of MISSISSIPPI, we cannot but express our astonishment at the assertions in the Preamble to the Act of that State, upon which the call of the Convention is founded, viz:

First. That the legislation of Congress at the last session was controlled by a dominant majority regardless of the Constitutional rights of the Slaveholding States; and

Secondly. That the legislation of Congress, such as it was, affords alarming evidence of a settled purpose on the part of said majority to destroy the institution of slavery, not only in the State of Mississippi, but in her sister States, and to subvert the sovereign power of that and other Slaveholding States.

These are sweeping assertions, the first of which is susceptible of easy refutation; for a simple reference to the years and days on the passage in Congress of the several measures thus denounced, will show, beyond all question, that no one of these measures would have become laws without a large contribution of Southern votes to its passage; and that, therefore, the legislation of Congress at the last session was no more controlled by a dominant majority adverse to the rights of the South than it was by the votes of the Senators and Representatives from the South itself.

It is equally demonstrable, if not by figures, by irrefragable facts, that, so far from the legislation referred to affording evidence of a determination on the part of a majority of Congress to destroy the institution of slavery in the South, it affords evidence of directly the reverse. No power denied to Congress by the Resolution of the Mississippi Convention—the same in which originated the call of the Nashville Convention—providing for a call of a General Convention of the People of that State in either of the events specified in that resolution, (viz: "the passage by Congress of the Wilmot Proviso, or of any law abolishing slavery in the District of Columbia, or prohibiting the slave-trade between the States,") was exercised by Congress during the last session. Congress took no issue upon either of the questions which that Convention had raised. So far, indeed, from any aggression upon the peculiar rights of the South by Congress, during its last session, much was gained for those rights, in what was done as well as what was not done by Congress. No attempt was made to enact a law prohibiting the slave-trade among the States; though, had it been made and succeeded, the Supreme Court has, by a decision upon a case arising in the State of Mississippi itself, forestalled any act of that character; having in that case decided that each State has the exclusive power to permit or prohibit the trade within her own limits, and that no such power belongs to Congress. With regard to the Wilmot Proviso, also, though it had been incorporated at a previous session in the act establishing the Territorial Government of Oregon, yet a majority in Congress did not, in the enactment at the last session of laws for the Government of the Territories of Utah and New Mexico, exercise the power by which slavery had been prohibited in the Territory of Oregon. Neither was any act passed, or sanctioned by either branch of Congress, abolishing slavery in the District of Columbia; but, on the contrary, decisive votes in each branch of Congress were given against it when proposed; whilst, in addition to the old and inefficient law for carrying into effect the provision of the Constitution for the recovery of fugitives from the Slave States, Congress at the last Session enacted another—and by the aid of the votes of many of those Members from non-slaveholding States who are denounced in mass in the Preamble of the Mississippi act as a dominant majority regardless of the rights of the Slaveholding States, &c.—the effect of which enactment has been to put a stop at once to the escape or abstraction of slaves from the States in which they are held. If there be an exception to this statement—though we do not remember to have heard of a single one—it only constitutes an exception to a general fact.

There is, in short, according to our understanding of the matter, nothing which the Southern States could reasonably desire—nothing within the constitutional power of Congress which the South could reasonably ask to be done or omitted—that Congress did not do or omit at its last Session.

Upon this head we may cite the authority of GEN. HAMILTON, of South Carolina, the leader of the first conflict of his State with the General Government—the citizen selected, moreover, by Governor SEABROOK as most worthy to succeed her late great leader in the seat in the Senate which his death had made vacant—who, in his late Letter addressed to the People of South Carolina, declares his opinion to be in concurrence with that of a majority of the People of all the States except South Carolina, that "neither one nor all of the measures" passed at the late Session of Congress "afford a justification for the disruption of this Confederacy." And, more recently, the grave counsels of another Carolinian, an eminent and a wise statesman, (MR. POINSETT,) addressed to his countrymen, have shown, too conclusively for denial, that there is nothing in the late action of Congress which any intelligent rational Southerner ought to consider as calling for or justifying vindictive or extra-constitutional action by any State or States of the South.

The act of the State of SOUTH CAROLINA makes no statement of grievances, but merely a general allusion to "aggressions," placing its action solely upon the ground of the recommendation by the Nashville Convention of the call of a Southern Congress, and directing, in compliance therewith, an election of Members to a State Convention to ratify whatever provision the SOUTHERN CONGRESS may recommend for the "future safety and independence" of the South. Regardless of the lessons of history, of the warnings of her wisest statesmen, and of the welfare of the mass of her citizens, this State, in appointing and directing the appointment of Representatives in such a Congress, has taken a step by which she has committed the destinies of the State to an experiment of the most reckless and hazardous character—nothing less than revolutionary—should any other Southern State or States be found demented and deluded enough to meet her in her proposed Congress. The stand which South Carolina has thus taken is one which separates her case from that of any other State, and places her in the attitude of actually attempting a DISSOLUTION OF THE UNION. An issue of such gravity demands a separate consideration at another day, in which we shall endeavor to trace to its source the series of events of which this act of South Carolina is one that can have taken by surprise only those who have been indifferent to what was passing before them. It is enough for us here to say that if South Carolina be present by her Representatives at the city of Montgomery on the day indicated in that act, we are confident in the belief that she will find herself there "alone in her glory."

With regard to the remaining Southern States, we do not believe that there is one which, after due consideration—a sufficient time for that purpose being allowed by the whole year intervening—will accept the overture of the State of SOUTH CAROLINA to meet her in the "Southern Congress," in which she proposes that whoever goes into it with her shall, in contempt and defiance of the Constitu-

tion, enter into a political covenant by which they are to sever themselves from the Union.

In one or two of the States, indeed, as in the States of VIRGINIA and NORTH CAROLINA, propositions have been made, probably with too little reflection, calculated to bring each of them in conflict with the Government. In both States, designs hostile to the Government of the United States are disavowed, the People of those States holding the idea of breaking up the Union in de-severed detestation; and no direct proposition having that object even remotely in view would be for a moment countenanced by the Legislature of either of these States. It may be very well questioned, however, if the two leading propositions in those bodies—the one, theoretic, to recognise the right of "secession" by any State; the other, practical, to exclude the products of one State, or a range of States, from another State—be not each of them fraught with more real danger to the Union than the undisguised proposition of South Carolina to hew it asunder.

Let us hope, however, that eventually neither of these propositions will receive the assent of the Legislatures of the States in which they are depending; or that, if they do, the mischief will be promptly rebuked by the People of those States, in whose bosoms devotion to the Union is no affection, but a deep-seated sentiment.

With regard to the right of Secession, which, as a State Rights doctrine, presented a bold front a year ago in the Capital of Virginia, plunging itself upon its derivation from the Resolutions of 1798-99, and Mr. Madison's Report of that day—the error of which was then exposed and exploded by producing the authority of MR. MADISON himself, directly against it—we never expect to hear of it again as a doctrine of the State Rights school, after the evidence which has been just brought to light, that, in the opinion of the Head and Oracle of that school, SPENCER ROANE, and his political associates, expressed more than forty years ago, "secession" is "TREASON." The occasion which called forth this denunciation of a doctrine which last year found many supporters in Virginia, was doubtless the threat of "secession" thrown out from New England about that time, when suffering under the exasperating pressure of an unlimited embargo. A like menace, as some of our readers may remember, was subsequently reiterated on the floor of the House of Representatives, by a distinguished gentleman who then represented the city of Boston in Congress, (who yet lives—and has lived long enough to regard as a dream the scenes in which he in his younger days bore a part;) who declared with studied precision of language that a certain bill (that for the admission of Louisiana into the Union) "would free the States from moral obligation, and, as it would be the right of all, it would be the duty of some to prepare for a separation, peacefully if they could, violently if they must." Whatever the occasion which extorted it, the sentiment of the Virginia patriarch, repeated in substance and unanswerably enforced by MR. MADISON more than twenty years afterwards, is true; the violent secession of a State from the Union, as it cannot be effected without levying war against the United States, is Treason, and nothing less. When it comes to be understood by persons of the present generation, under whatever party banner they have heretofore ranged themselves, that the doctrine of the Right of Secession originated with the Essex Junto, was arraigned and condemned, as soon as promulgated, by the Conscript Fathers of the Ancient Dominion, and is, as now revived, but a sickly sprout from the root of Nullification, we shall hear no more, be assured, from any respectable quarter, of State Secession, whether, as has been figured in the flowers of oratory, as "a graceful retirement" from the Union, or in the form, more consistent with the reality, of a fearful and fatal avulsion of one of its limbs from the body of the Republic.

And now, with regard to the proposition, favored by many good Whigs as well as Democrats, friends to the Union too, for bringing back, through the taxing power of the individual States, the discord and dissonance of Legislation between the States and Congress which existed under the old Confederation, and bringing it back, too, with the avowed intent of commercial retaliation or warfare upon Sister States: those persons must be blinded by unreasonable resentments, who do not at once perceive that any such legislation would be directly against the spirit and intent of the Constitution of the United States. To bring the matter more plainly to the apprehension of those of our readers who may not have had time or occasion to look into it before, we quote from the Message of the Governor of Virginia to the Legislature—being the most respectable source from which the proposition has been directly made—his recent recommendation of such taxation, as follows:

EXTRACT FROM GOVERNOR FLOYD'S MESSAGE.

"A necessity now exists for increased amounts of revenue; and I earnestly recommend to your consideration the propriety of laying a tax upon all the products of the non-slaveholding States offered for sale within our territory. It can be easily accomplished, and will, in my opinion, constitute the most persuasive of all arguments to ensure a proper recognition of our rights."

"Let inspectors be appointed for each county and town in the State, whose duty it shall be to examine all manufactures brought into their districts; and let a tax of ten per cent. be imposed upon such as are found to be manufactured or produced in the non-slaveholding States. It should be provided, moreover, that all merchandise be taken and regarded as the production of non-slaveholding States, unless sufficient proof to the contrary is afforded by the vendor. I would also recommend that such a tax be imposed upon foreign goods imported through non-slaveholding States as will offer effectual encouragement to direct importation into our own ports."

In examining the decisions of the highest judicial authority on analogous questions, we find that in the case of Brown v. the State of Maryland, (recently quoted in the Richmond Enquirer as affirming the right of a State to tax imports,) the Supreme Court held that goods imported before the package is broken, may be sold at auction by the importer without the payment of auction duties; but that, when the package is broken and the goods imported become mingled with the other property of the State, they are subject to taxation by the State in the same way as other property. This principle has been practically admitted, and, perhaps, never seriously questioned since the adoption of the Constitution. Licensees have been required to be taken out by all who sell foreign merchandise, wholesale or retail, by every State in the Union; and in some of the States the value of merchandise in trade has been taxed the same as other property.

But the Governor, in his message, states that "a necessity now exists for increased revenue," and recommends earnestly to the consideration of the Legislature "the propriety of laying a tax upon all the products of the non-slaveholding States offered for sale within our territory." And he adds, "I would also recommend that such a tax be imposed upon foreign goods imported through non-slaveholding States, as will offer effectual encouragement to direct importation into our own ports." Here are acts recommended for the avowed double purpose of taxing the products of other States, and also the merchandise imported from them.

In the Constitution, power is given to Congress "to regulate commerce with foreign nations and among the several States, and with the Indian tribes." Now, it will be observed that the same power is given to Congress over commerce among the several States as with foreign nations; and such is the doctrine of the Supreme Court. The Supreme Court has said, in the case of Gibbons v. Ogden, "commerce among the several States" means commerce intermingled with the States, "which may pass the external boundary of each, and be introduced into the interior." And, in the case of the United States v. Coombs, the Court says that the commercial power of Congress "does not stop at the mere boundary line of a State; nor is it confined to acts done on the water, or in the necessary course of the navigation thereof. It extends to such acts, done on land, which interfere with, obstruct, or prevent the exercise of the power to regulate commerce and navigation with foreign nations and among the States."

If the power to tax property brought into a State, whether from abroad or from a sister State, shall be so exercised as clearly to show an intention by the State to regulate commerce, it would be void. And the classification which the Governor makes between goods imported by the slave States and the free ones, would show clearly that the measure was designed to regulate commerce. No State can tax the products of any other State, as such, without coming in conflict with the Constitution. Such products may be taxed in common with similar products within the State, but not as the Governor proposes.

A Legislature of a State may select the objects of taxation; but if those objects are so selected as materially to affect commerce among the States or from abroad, and especially if laid with the expressed purpose of so doing, the tax would be unconstitutional. If this principle could be carried out as proposed by Governor FLOYD, it would supersede the regulation of commerce by Congress, to which body the Constitution has exclusively confided the power. A State cannot do that indirectly which the Constitution prohibits it from doing directly. This maxim, the soundness of which cannot be questioned, strongly applies to the case under consideration.

It has been remarked by Chief Justice MARSHALL, and other members of the Bench, as is indeed known to every one acquainted with the history of his own country, that a necessity for the exercise of a general power to regulate foreign commerce and commerce among the States, conducted more than any other consideration to the adoption of the Constitution. Before this was done, some of the States, with a view to advance their respective local interests, adopted commercial regulations hostile to other States, and this, it was seen, could only be prevented by giving the commercial power to the Federal Government. But if the course indicated by the Governor of Virginia should receive the sanction of the Legislature, and be carried out, it would subvert the Constitution. We do not believe that the great State of Virginia, so distinguished for its loyalty to the General Government in times past, will, by sanctioning the recommendation of its Governor, occupy so unenviable a position in the Confederacy, and in the estimation of public opinion.

The opinion of Chief Justice RUFFIN, of North Carolina, referred to in the "Richmond Enquirer" of the 24th of December, (reported in Dev. & Bat. 1st vol. p. 19,) goes no further, we presume, than that of Chief Justice MARSHALL, which was, as above stated, that, after an import becomes mixed up with other property of the State, it is subject to taxation. To subject it to taxation, therefore, it must be mixed up with other property in the State. But the Governor of Virginia proposes to lay a duty of ten per cent. on all property from abroad brought into the State, whether the product of the free States, or brought into Virginia through the instrumentality of those States. This would be a tax upon the import, and would violate that part of the Constitution which declares that no State "shall lay any imposts or duties on imports," &c.

A proposition so directly opposed to the positive provisions of the Constitution, as a tax by Southern States upon the products of the free States, one would have thought, had we not this evidence to the contrary, could hardly be proposed by any one who had ever read that instrument, and will surely, now that attention has been called to it, never receive countenance from either Governors, Legislators, or People, who profess any respect for that fundamental law.

In conclusion of our survey of the actual state of the relations between the General Government and those States which were, a year and more ago, represented as so disaffected that nothing short of revolution would appease their malcontent, let us remark, that the test to which the General Government has been subjected in the intermediate time has been the severest, short of actual collision of arms between that Government and any one or more of the State Governments, to which it could have been exposed.

That test it has stood unharmed. The excitement in many parts of the country, but in the South especially, has been intense; the Debates in Congress, in State Legislatures, at Conventions, and at gatherings of the People, have been animated, often vehement, and at times of alarming import. This excitement has in a great degree subsided: the Debates have ended, as Debates in a Representative Government always should do, in putting to the vote the contested questions, and in peaceful acquiescence, by the body of the people, in the will of the majority, ascertained through organs established by the People themselves. If there be factious exceptions to this in the North or in the South, the faithful execution of the laws will prevent any serious consequences from them.

In all this conflict of opinion and action during the last twelve months and more, in which the in-

terests, the affections, and the passions of millions of men were engaged, not a drop of blood has been spilled, nor a hair of the head of any man harmed by the Government. Sedition has been publicly taught, in places high and low; been preached from the pulpit, and expounded from the bar; State Conventions to deliberate on propositions of a nature highly dangerous to the Government and to the public welfare, have met and have adjourned; and the liberty of no man has been restrained on account of any of these things, though in any other Government on earth such seditious practices would have been visited with condign punishment. Have we not reason to be proud of a Government so free and yet so strong?

The authority of the Judiciary and the supremacy of the Constitution and the Laws of the United States, meanwhile, in matters within its proper jurisdiction, remain in full force and vigor. The machinery of the Government has worked on as steadily, as harmoniously, and as efficiently, as though no Nashville Convention had been planned, nor any Southern Congress summoned. Even the demise of the Chief Magistrate of the Nation—the brave, the kind-hearted, and yet gravely wise old man, whose death drew copious tears from his political enemies as well as friends—and the sudden substitution in his place of the patriot Statesman whose firm and trusty hand now guides the helm of State—except as a great moral lesson of the uncertainty of life and the perishable quality of all earthly honors—even such an event as this, occurring in the midst of the domestic contention which we have just referred to, involving an entire change of Administration, did not disturb the regular operation of the Government for a single day.

May we not exult in testimony such as these facts afford that the Government under which we live—the strength of which has twice passed the ordeal of foreign wars; which has escaped the dangers, during the first of these wars, of a bankrupt treasury and a degraded and depreciated currency—is able to bear also the trying calm of profound peace, accompanied by an inundation of mineral wealth, and a plethora of commercial prosperity, more dangerous to internal tranquillity than all the excitements of war and the allurements of conquest and its dazzling acquisitions?

Far more honorable, in our estimation, to the character of our People and of our Institutions—far more likely to ensure our own and the world's confidence and esteem, is the triumph which these facts exhibit over the restlessness, the projects of change, the longing to be "better than well" which a general peace breeds, than the most brilliant victory that could be achieved, by the best appointed forces, by land or sea, over the most redoubtable of human powers!

The New Year opened on Wednesday with one of the brightest of days, which imparted a heartier gladness to the joyous feelings of the season. As usual, the President's Mansion was thronged with multitudes of official and other persons, and of both sexes, pressing to offer the compliments of the season to the Chief Magistrate, and to exchange them with each other—the showy costumes of the Diplomatic Corps and of our Military and Naval Officers, as well as the smiling faces and bright dresses of the Ladies, adding to the brilliancy and interest of the scene. From the President's Mansion hundreds of visitors proceeded to pay their respects to the Secretary of State and the other Heads of Departments, the President of the Senate, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and various citizens who receive their friends on New Year's day, among them the Mayor of the city; by all of whom their numerous visitors were hospitably entertained.

Perfect good order, creditable to the city, prevailed throughout the day—no instance of inebriety or any impropriety being observed.

THE LEGISLATURE OF MASSACHUSETTS assembled at Boston on Wednesday. In the Senate HENRY WILSON was elected President, and NATHANIEL P. BANKS, jr. was chosen Speaker of the House.

The officers of the Senate are members of the Free-Soil party, and those of the House, Democrats—that division of the spoils having been agreed to by the caucuses of the two parties. It is understood that the arrangements, so far as completed, do not extend beyond the organization of the Legislature, the subjects of the election of State officers and United States Senator being left for further negotiation between the high contracting parties.

DISASTERS ON THE LAKES.—The Buffalo Commercial Advertiser of Saturday publishes a detailed statement showing the loss of life and property on the Lakes during the past year. The vessels which met with disasters were thirty-one steamers, nine propellers, two bargues, thirty-four brigs, eighty-eight schooners, and six scows—in all one hundred and seventy. The loss of property was \$558,926. Ten steamboats, twenty-one sailing vessels, and probably one propeller, were entirely lost, the remainder were only partially damaged. The loss of life was three hundred and ninety-five, of which three hundred and seventy-five were on board steamers and twenty on sailing vessels.

A FRIGATE FOR THE WORLD'S FAIR.—The Portsmouth (Va.) Pilot of Thursday says: "This morning's mail from Washington brings us high naval authority for saying that the Government has determined to send the frigate *St. Lawrence* to London, and that orders were issued on the 31st to have her gun-deck guns taken out, her gun-deck ports well plankaded and caulked in, and the ship prepared without delay for that object. She will not go as a man-of-war, but retain a part, if not all, the spar-deck guns."

WORK OF THE ARMORIES.—We learn from a report from the Secretary of War, laid before Congress yesterday, that the expenditures on account of the National Armories, (at Springfield and Harper's Ferry,) during the last fiscal year, amounted to \$462,511; and that, besides other articles, there were manufactured during the year 27,955 percussion muskets, 2,676 percussion rifles, and 200 musketoons; and 66,972 flint-lock muskets were altered to percussion muskets.

GREAT BANK ROBBERY.—The Otsego County Bank, at Cooperstown, New York, was robbed, between Saturday afternoon and Monday morning last, of thirty-two thousand dollars, nearly as follows: \$5,000 bills of Central Bank, Cherry Valley; \$19,000 bills of various banks, mostly in New York State, west of Schenectady; \$9,000 bills of Otsego County Bank; \$4,500 in gold and \$2,500 in silver. A reward of five thousand dollars is offered for such information as will lead to the conviction of the burglar and recovery of the money, or \$2,000 for the former only, and \$3,000 for the latter, or in that proportion for any part of it.

NAVAL.—The United States frigate *Albatross* arrived at St. Thomas on the 14th of December, from the Western Islands, bound to the United States. There were a large number of returning Californians at St. Thomas, waiting a conveyance to the United States—there being no American merchant vessel at that port.

THE AUSTRO-HUNGARIAN.

The Senate found itself on Monday in a debate of a good deal not of great importance. It arose to print ten thousand copies of a correspondence between M. HULSEMANN, the Austrian fairer, and MR. WEBSTER, Secretary of State, which correspondence was called following resolution of the Senate of the:

Resolved, That the President be requested, patible with the public interest, to communicate copies of any correspondence, if any has taken place between the Department of State and the Austrian Government respecting the appointment or proceedings of the Secretary of State to examine and report upon the condition and the Hungarian people during their recent struggles.

The correspondence thus called for was communicated to the Senate by the President of the United States, and will be found in the pages, as well as the debate to which rise. As the reader will perceive by the little feeling was manifested by some of Senators at what was deemed the brusque style of Austrian remonstrance, but there was a unanimous concurrence not only in the mastery ability of the Secretary's reply, but in its admirable dignity and moderation.

CUI BONO?

It is recommended, we observe, by several esteemed contemporaries, that there be held in this city, on the 22d February next, a grand convocation of the Friends of the Union, from all the States of the Confederacy. If such a Convention were necessary, or even expedient, a more appropriate day for it certainly could not be selected than the anniversary of the Birth-day of him, that great Man, to whose other titles of honor might well be added that of Father of the existing Union. But, to throw out of view the difficulties which oppose the full execution of this suggestion, we must say that we have not been able to perceive the advantages which, it seems to be supposed, will result from such an assemblage here. The expression of conservative sentiments by spontaneous gatherings of the People at their homes, in the different States, furnish, in our opinion, the most satisfactory guarantees of attachment to the Union, and obedience to the laws. There, they are free from any appearance of extraneous influence or party purpose. Here, a movement of this sort might be differently construed. The National Legislature here assembled, representing every State and District of the Union, constitute the fitting assemblage at the seat of Government, both for counsel and action, and an all-sufficient exponent of the sentiments of the country. Moreover, the very limited accommodation would render it difficult for any large number of additional visitors to find quarters here during the session of Congress for a single night, and we perceive that one writer recommends the assembling of thirty thousand.

We throw out these suggestions for the consideration of those friends who have favored the proposition. The annexed extracts from an article in the *Winchester (Va.) Republican*, on the subject of the proposition by the Governor of that State for a National Convention, appear to us to be quite applicable to the proposed meeting in this city:

"Let us see what practical good could result from such a scheme. If it be intended that none but the friends of the Union shall form this grand assembly, no more can be done by them than has already been done by the friends of the Union, who have signified their desire for peace in the enthusiastic meetings that have been held from one extremity of the country to the other. Concerning this matter of the late compromise, and the intention to preserve its component parts inviolate, the majority of the people have already declared favorably and without equivocation. More than this cannot be done at this period. We must leave it for time to show whether or not the assurances so plainly given will be observed in good faith."

"Let us put the very best construction we can upon the action of such a Convention as the one proposed, and then question ourselves concerning its efficacy in healing the dissensions of the times. Can it do more than Congress has already done? Can it do as much? The reply must be, that it can do neither more, nor as much. The action of Congress is binding upon the country, and its observance can be enforced by law."

"The Unionists are satisfied with the Compromise measures, and consider them a final adjustment of the vexed question. But the fanatics, to whom these measures were distasteful on account of their conciliatory tone, desire to prolong an agitation that affords them such an exquisite sense of delight. Let quiet be restored to the country, and their vocation is gone. Excitement is the element in which they breathe freely and well. And one of the surest ways of keeping up this excitement is to have meetings in prospect against which they can declaim. Were they to be permitted to choose, there would be National Conventions, Southern Conventions, and Northern Assemblies in the proportion of three to one of the present rate. Let us take away this healthful atmosphere of their existence, and we shall hear of them no more."

"The best mode of ascertaining public sentiment upon the late compromise measures, and whether those measures will be sustained, is to await the silent but sure influence of time. For ourselves, we believe that they will be observed in good faith."

UNION MEETING IN ARKANSAS.—The Van Buren Intelligencer, which, we believe, was almost the only paper in Arkansas which sustained the project for holding the Nashville Convention, contains a call, signed by one hundred and twenty names, requesting the citizens of Crawford county, without distinction of party, to meet at the Court House, in the city of Van Buren, on Saturday, the 7th of December, at one o'clock, "for the purpose of expressing their devotion to the American Union, and their disapprobation of all measures tending to its dissolution."

THE NEW HAMPSHIRE CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION have nearly closed their labors, and are expected to adjourn this week. Among the principal amendments of the Constitution, we find the following: All religious and property tests as a qualification for office have been stricken out. The Governor and members of both houses of the Legislature are made elective for two years. The Council has been abolished. The Legislature is to meet biennially, in June. The Secretary of State and Treasurer are to be elected by the people for two years. The Judges of the Supreme Court and the Attorney General are made elective by popular vote for six years. County Judges and other officers are to be chosen by the people of each county for four years. The office of Superintendent of Public Instruction has been created—the incumbent to be elected by the people, and his duties defined by the Legislature. All elections by the people are to be decided on the plurality principle.

RELIEF TO VESSELS ON THE COAST.—The Collector of the port of New York, at the instance of the Government, has ordered the revenue cutter *Morris*, Lieut. Commander MARTIN, to be placed at the disposal of the Board of Underwriters of that city, to cruise on the coast, to relieve vessels which may be in want of assistance, &c. The *Morris*, after taking in provisions, cables, and every thing necessary for supplying the numerous vessels which are likely to be on the coast in a crippled condition, sailed on Thursday evening.